United Nations E/CN.17/1999/L.6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
29 April 1999

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Seventh session
19–30 April 1999
Agenda item 5
Economic sector/major group: tourism

Draft decision submitted by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Navid Hanif (Pakistan), on the basis of informal consultations

Tourism and sustainable development

The Commission on Sustainable Development,

Recalling the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21,[1] in particular Assembly resolution S/19-2, annex, of 28 June 1997, in paragraph 69 of which the Assembly requested the Commission on Sustainable Development to develop an action-oriented international programme of work on sustainable tourism development, to be defined in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity[2] and other relevant bodies; and stressed that policy development and implementation should take place in cooperation with all interested parties, especially the private sector and local and indigenous communities,

Recalling also that the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/200 of 15 December 1998, proclaimed the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism and in its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998 proclaimed 2002 also as the International Year of Mountains,

Noting with appreciation the outcome of the multi-stakeholder dialogue at the current session of the Commission and the progress made so far by major groups in promoting sustainable tourism development,

---

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environment Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

99-12382 (E) 290499

1. *Decides* to adopt an international work programme on sustainable tourism development, containing the elements outlined below and to begin its implementation with appropriate means and resources, especially for developing countries, which will be reviewed in 2002 when the ten-year review of progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be carried out;

2. *Urges* Governments:

(a) To advance sustainable tourism development, *inter alia,* through the development and implementation of policies and national strategies or master plans for sustainable tourism development based on Agenda 21, which will encourage their tourism industry, assist in attracting foreign direct investment and appropriate environmentally sound technologies, and also provide focus and direction for the active participation of major groups, including national tourism councils and, as appropriate, tourism agencies and organizations, and the private sector as well as indigenous and local communities;

(b) To consult, as appropriate, with all major groups and local communities in the tourism development process, including policy formulation, planning, management and sharing of benefits, which could reflect the need to harmonize the relationship among the people, the community and the environment;

(c) To work in partnership with major groups, especially at the local level, to ensure active participation in tourism-related planning and development;

(d) To undertake capacity-building work with indigenous and local communities in order to facilitate their active participation, at all levels of the tourism development process, including transparent decision-making and sharing of benefits, and to create awareness of the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits that they are bearing;

(e) To create the appropriate institutional, legal, economic, social and environmental framework by developing and applying a mix of instruments, as appropriate, such as integrated land-use planning and coastal zone management, economic instruments, social and environmental impact assessment for tourist facilities, including gender aspects, and voluntary initiatives and agreements;

(f) To maximize the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty by developing appropriate strategies in cooperation with all major groups, and indigenous and local communities;

(g) To welcome the major groups' agreement to promote sustainable tourism development through music, art and drama and to participate in such educational activities;

(h) To facilitate destination-specific in-flight educational videos and other materials on sustainable development in relation to tourism and to encourage airline carriers to routinely screen such videos on all international and long-haul domestic routes;

(i) To promote a favourable framework for small and medium-sized enterprises, the major engine for job creation in the tourism sector, by reducing administrative burdens, facilitating access to capital and providing training in management and other skills, in recognition of the employment potential of sustainable tourism development;

(j) To take strong and appropriate action, through the development and enforcement of specific legislation/measures, against any kind of illegal, abusive or exploitative tourist activity, including sexual exploitation/abuse, in recognition of the fact that such activities have particularly adverse impacts and pose significant social, health and cultural threats, and that all countries have a role to play in the efforts to stamp them out;

(k) To participate in international and regional processes that address issues relevant to sustainable tourism development; to consider the ratification or adoption, and promote the implementation and enforcement, as appropriate, of standards or guidelines relevant to the travel and tourism industry, such as in the labour and health fields; and to support initiatives, especially through organizations like the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, that would make an early and positive contribution to sustainable tourism development;

(l) To support appropriate measures to better inform tourists about cultural, ecological and other values and provide accurate information on the safety of tourist destinations, so as to enable consumers to make informed choices;

3. *Calls upon* the tourism industry:

(a) To develop environmentally, socially and culturally compatible forms of tourism and to continue the development and implementation of voluntary initiatives in support of sustainable tourism development, bearing in mind that such forms of tourism and initiatives should meet, or preferably exceed, relevant local, national, regional or international standards;

(b) To further commit itself to the goal of sustainable tourism development by working towards guiding principles and objectives for sustainable tourism development and information for tourists on ecological and cultural values in destination regions;

(c) To further develop voluntary eco-efficiency and appropriate management systems to save costs and to promote sustainable forms of tourism;

(d) To take effective steps to reduce the volume of waste associated with travel and tourism activities;

(e) To "design with nature" in collaboration with planning authorities, by using low impact designs, materials and technologies, so as not to damage the environmental or cultural assets that tourists seek to experience and that sustain the local community, and to undertake measures to restore tourist destinations with degraded environments;

(f) To distance itself publicly from illegal, abusive or exploitive forms of tourism;

(g) To meet or preferably exceed relevant national or international labour standards;

4. *Invites,* as appropriate, Governments and major groups, as well as the United Nations system, in close collaboration with the World Tourism Organization, while building on relevant work carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme and under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant conventions and organizations, and taking note of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[3] adopted at Barbados in 1994, to consider undertaking the following initiatives and to keep the Commission on Sustainable Development informed on progress achieved:

(a) To promote sustainable tourism development in order to increase the benefits from the tourism resources for the population in the host communities and maintain the cultural and environmental integrity of the host community; to encourage cooperation of

[3] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap I, resolution 1, annex II.

major groups at all levels with a view to facilitating Local Agenda 21 initiatives and promoting linkages within the local economy in order that benefits may be more widely shared; to this end, greater efforts should be undertaken for the employment of the local workforce, and the use of local products and skills;

(b) To support national efforts by countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and major groups towards sustainable tourism development through relevant capacity-building activities and programmes as well as multilateral and bilateral financial and technical assistance, and appropriate technologies in all aspects of sustainable tourism development, including environmental impact assessment and management and education in the field of tourism;

(c) To encourage more responsible behaviour among tourists through ensuring respect for national laws, cultural values, social norms and tradition as well as by increasing public awareness, in addition to other measures;

(d) To promote the application of integrated planning approaches to tourism development at the local level, including through encouraging the use of Local Agenda 21 as a process for planning, implementing and monitoring sustainable tourism development and recognizing the potential for integration of Local Agenda 21 with Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry as well as other such initiatives;

(e) To provide relevant direction on research activities, and collect and disseminate information on best practices and techniques, including an appropriate mix of instruments to minimize negative and to promote positive environmental, social and cultural impacts from tourism in developed and developing countries and in countries with economies in transition;

(f) To promote the exchange of information on transportation, accommodation and other services, public awareness raising programmes and education, and various voluntary initiatives and ways to minimize the effects of natural disasters on tourism. Possible forms of this information exchange should be explored in consultation with relevant partners, utilizing, *inter alia,* such means as bilateral and multi-lateral arrangements;

(g) To undertake studies on appropriate measures for promoting sustainable tourism development, such as community planning in fragile ecosystems, including in coastal areas, and to develop tools to assist local authorities in determining appropriate management regimes and their capacity for tourism development;

(h) To further develop or support integrated initiatives, preferably through pilot projects, to enhance the diffusion of innovations and to avoid, wherever possible, duplication and waste of resources;

(i) To undertake activities that would be supportive of the preparations for both the International Year of Ecotourism and the International Year of Mountains, as well as activities of the International Coral Reef Initiative;

(j) To clarify further the concepts of sustainable tourism and ecotourism;

(k) To develop core indicators for sustainable tourism development, taking into account the work of the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations, as well as the ongoing testing phase of indicators for sustainable development;

(l) To undertake a comprehensive survey and assessment of the results of implementing existing voluntary initiatives and guidelines relating to the economic, sociocultural and environmental sustainability of tourism, to be reported to the Commission

on Sustainable Development in order to identify best practices with respect to raising awareness of sustainable tourism development;

(m) To consider establishing a global network, taking into account the work of the World Tourism Organization, regional mechanisms and all major groups, as appropriate, to promote an exchange of information and views on sustainable tourism development, including on ecotourism;

(n) To cooperate with the United Nations Environment Programme in further developing guiding principles for sustainable tourism development;

(o) To encourage business and industry to take steps to implement eco-efficiency approaches, in order to reduce environmental impacts associated with travel and tourism activities, in particular the volume of packaging waste, especially in small island developing States;

5. *Invites* the World Tourism Organization to consider informed major groups' participation, as appropriate, in the development, implementation and monitoring of its Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, including those provisions relating to a code of conduct for tourists;

6. *Invites* relevant agencies, particularly the International Maritime Organization, to evaluate whether existing regulations on marine pollution and compliance with them are sufficient to provide adequate protection to fragile coastal zones from adverse impacts as a result of tourist vessel activities;

7. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to further consider, in the context of the process of the exchange of experiences, existing knowledge and best practice on sustainable tourism development and biological diversity with a view to contributing to international guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile mountain ecosystems;

8. *Welcomes* the work of major groups, especially the business community, trade and tourism industry associations, non-governmental organizations and other groups involved in travel and tourism, to contribute to efforts to achieve sustainable tourism development, including through educational initiatives and action plans based on Agenda 21 and other related documents, and particularly welcomes their commitment through the continuation of their work with all major groups, to do more, and to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development on their progress;

9. *Invites* the United Nations Secretariat and the World Tourism Organization, in consultation with major groups and other relevant international organizations, to jointly facilitate the establishment of an ad hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism to assess financial leakages and determine how to maximize benefits for indigenous and local communities; and to prepare a joint initiative to improve information availability and capacity-building for participation, and address other matters relevant to the implementation of the international work programme on sustainable tourism development.